

A WORD of WISDOM and COUNSEL to the Officers and Souldiers of the ARMY in ENGLAND, &c.

To weigh and consider before the light and power of their day bee shut up in darknesse when they cannot Act for God.

THE people of this Common-wealth hath by deep and sad experiences not onely seen the falsenesse and deceivableness of many fair words and pretences, whereby they have been betrayed of their liberties and freedom, and nothing yet but bondage and slavery is left upon them, but they also through their deep sufferings have learned to know the spirits of men. And though every appearance of a Power that ariseth gets new words and fair pretences, but still in the old spirit; Yet we do perfectly know, that it is the new Spirit of the Lord put in the inward parts, from which men must act for the Lord and the Liberties of his people, before they be established in Righteousness, and enjoy the Liberty of their Consciences. And we see that God hath given us many dayes, which should have been dayes of Liberty and of plentiful redemption; But through mens departing from the leadings of God, and using their own wisdom to pervert them, they became dayes of persecution and cruelty, which for the Elects sake (which suffered in them) was shortened; as for instance,

Oliver Cromwell in his dayes made many Vows, Promises, Engagements and Professions for the Liberty of tender Consciences, as the honest men of this Nation are not ignorant, & how that at Dunbar, he confest unto God in his prayer, That if the Lord would but deliver him that time, he would away that great oppression of Tithes; which when he was delivered, both at Dunbar and many other times, & had a prize put into his hand, yet had no heart to improve it; but contrary to all his prayers, promises and engagements, suffered and tollerated the wicked spirit of persecution, in the murdering of Ministers and Magistrates to Rule in the Land over tender Consciences, even with violence and blood covered the earth and filled the whole Nation; suffering Laws to be made for Tithes, and for persecuting of tender Consciences, and so building again that which he had destroyed, and so made himself a Transgressor; but for the Elects sake his dayes were shortened.

In the dayes of R. Cromwell many of that succeeding Parliament began to declare their sensibleness, how that O. Cromwell had betrayed the Nation and Liberty, and left them in great bondage, debt, persecution and slavery. But how soon they were perverted, and became more bloody and cruel against all that fear God, (the upright in heart are sensible) setting up in themselves that which they declared against in him, and in stead of giving Liberty and freedom to the Army and to the people of God, they voted down that liberty and freedom which they already had (*viz.*) of meeting together one with another in the fear and worship of God, and so they became cruel as the Ostridge in the Wildernesse, and as evening Wolves; but for the Elects sake was their dayes shortened.

The long and late Parl. they came up with greater pretences of liberty & freedom, then all that was before them; and the people generally applauding them, by telling them that they were the beginners of settling the Nation in the way of Common-wealth; and did expect they should perfect the people in Liberty and Freedom outwardly (which by the other Powers they had suffered under) expecting that they should remove those burthens which were laid upon tender Consciences by impositions and cruel sufferings, and in their beginning they seemed to be given up to do the work expected from them, and did publish it in their weekly news to the Nation several times, that it was their real intent to make the Nation a Free Common-wealth, not in name but in nature, and this was often expressed by them, and indeed they did something more then those that went before them, in setting at Liberty those that were imprisoned because they could not pay Tythes to the Priests, and because they could not swear, and because they could not put off their hats to honour pride and ambition, and because they spoke the Truth against the deceits of the Priests, which both the Souldiers and the honest hearted in the Nation knows how treacherous they have been, and the hinderance of every appearance of God in the Nation, for the chief cause of Gods breaking down, and of bringing into ignominy, shame and reproach those late powers before mentioned was the letting in of the Priests spirit and flatteries; as O. Cromwell, if alive would witness, or those that are alive may witness for him, that he had never been such a covenant-breaker and betrayer of the Nations Liberties, but by letting in that wicked interest, which made him a reproach, a by-word, a hissing among the people. And the two late Parliaments, it was their joyning to that betraying interest of the Priests, and neglecting of the Nations business that brought darknesse and confusion, and consequently a dissolution upon them: And the last as I said did something more then the former; But when they began to revive the committee for plundered Ministers, and did not take notice, nor call any Committee to subdue or punish the plundering Ministers, of which they were informed from divers parts of the Nation, which had feloniously taken away the goods of many an honest innocent man; then did Gods indignation grow hot against them, and then was it time for them to be dissolved, for they had finished their day, and they had done all that ever they

would have done for the Lord, for bonds and violence was in their hearts; but for the Elects sake, which hath alwayes borne a true Testimony against the oppression and cruelty under which the Innocent suffers, was their days shortened.

All those before mentioned had their day from the Lord given them to try and to prove them, and they have been tried and proved.

And now you the Army have your day from the Lord, wherein you will be tried and proved, and you will be more inexcusable if you do not the things pretended, then any that hath been before you, for you see what hath been the cause of the fall, and you see how that through Pride and Ambition, flatteries and fair pretences, the Cause of God, and the Peoples Liberties have been betrayed by those that have sought honour one of another, and not the honour which belongs unto God onely; Therefore if you would have the Lord to honour you, and keep you in renown in the Nation, seek not your selves, but deny your own Lordships honours and Excellencies, let none cleave unto you by flatteries, in giving you titles in seeming respect, and honors, for that will betray you, and lead you from that Innocency by which you should act for the Lord; and as now you have Power, exercise it, in chusing men fearing God, and hating covetousnesse, ambition, pride and honor, that so the Nation may enjoy that Liberty and Freedom which they have long waited for, and suffer none to act that persecution in your names which hath already covered the Nation with blacknesse and darknesse, and hath brought Gods curse upon their proceedings.

One thing is upon me to acquaint you with, which many of you it may be doth not know, which is this; One of the little horns which pushed & persecuted the Lambs of Christ, is springing up again, and begins to be as fierce as ever; For yesterday in the Exchequer at Westminster, Judge Parker and Judge Wilde would not receive a true answer from an honest man (who is well known for his uprightness) against a false Bill prohibited against him by a Priest, unless he would give it in upon Oath; and therefore because he could not swear for Conscience sake, but did testify the Truth from his heart, he was committed Prisoner to the Fleet, and several others True and Just men, and Friends to the Common-wealth, was denied the Law, and their answers rejected, because they could not swear; but in whose names and by whose authority they act those things is not yet declared to the Nation: If those Judges act those things in the name and by the authority of the Army or their late chosen Counsel, let it be openly manifest; and if not, but they did it in their own names, let the Nation know it; For this is worse then the last Parliament, who did set many free who were so imprisoned, & did give commissions and receive Testimony without swearing; and Judge Parker seems to have forgotten that knowledge and fidelity which he had of that people when he went his last circuit in the North, and his so favouring the Priests now, shews that he hath forgotten since he confest that he was Sermon-sick at Carlisle this last Summer, when he wished that a Quaker had been there, and saw that they had reason to declare against them, &c.

But to us it is no strange thing to see men so apt to change and to betray their own knowledge for filthy lucre sake, while the corruption of the Laws through bribery and deceit is upheld, which once the Souldiers had a clear sight of, and a determination to pull down, and now it is the onely day of their tryal to prove themselves, and it is doing of that which you have accused the Parliaments for not doing that must make you manifest; for people will no longer believe words; for your selves know, that the good people of the Nation have made daily complaints and Petitions, and the Officers and Souldiers also, against that general oppression of Tithes, and the Parliament hath onely given them thanks for their good expressions, and good affections, but done nothing, until their thanks did even become loathsome to the people.

Is it not a grievous thing, and intollerable to be born, that innocent and faithful men (who see and deny the Priests deceit) should be forced, whether by Law or Violence, to give them the tenth part of all their labours and increase, and they with that mony to buy horse and arms to raise a Rebellion, to murder and destroy those men who deny to give them that which your Law hath caused to be taken from them, and so both the Law and Priesthood is joyned together in oppression of the people.

And the Nation is very sensible that all this while they have but been deceived by promises and fair pretences, Therefore be diligent to improve the light of your day, before the Sun set upon you, and you be shut up in darknesse, and the power to do good be taken from you.

London the 24
of the 8. mo.
1659.

A Member of his Army, who makes war
with the sword of his mouth,
RICHARD HUBBERTHORN.